



The Bluegrass Bulletin

Published by The American Bluegrass Society for the promotion and preservation of old time BLUEGRASS MUSIC.
PETER A. RICHARDSON, Editor and Publisher
Post Office Box 397, Seffner, Florida 33584

GUITAR

BANJO

MANDOLIN

DOBRO

FIDDLE

and STRING BASS

Volume No. 1

NOVEMBER 1965

No. 1

WELL, HERE GOES.....I think that things like columns etc., just for the sake of following a worn out format is valueless in a paper of this sort. We are interested in saying something and until I have been explained why column lines are necessary I will dispense with them. SEND US ANY INFORMATION THAT YOU DEEM OF INTEREST TO THE MEMBERS and we will print if it is printable and useful. SO KEEP ALL THOSE CARDS AND LETTERS COMING IN. The Bulletin will be only as good as you help it to be. One man with a typewriter cannot do it all. We have kept the dues to a bare minimum to defray printing costs ONLY. So, lets have a good news sheet with some good worthwhile items. Lets not endeavor to use the Bulletin as a sounding board for a gripe that is on the order of national protest and all that sort of junk. We are not a political organ, we are simply people who like Bluegrass Music and I cannot see where politics and social philosophy have any bearing ---this is a fun club and a fun paper NO PREACHING, NO LECTURES ON SOCIAL WELFARE, POLITICS, ETC., just a FUN CLUB, AN EXPRESSION OF OUR HOBBY. Perhaps there are Bluegrass protest songs about cheating in love and protests against amplified instruments in Bluegrass but I do not think Bluegrass Music is responsible for, nor inclined in that direction. Certainly, some of your letters may include some statement about the healthy affect of Bluegrass Music on society and related statements, but lets leave the SOCIAL and POLITICAL to someone else who makes a living at it!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Peter Richardson, Editor.

THE BLUEGRASS BAND.....Article No. 1 in a LONG, LONG series on the subject. The subject of BLUEGRASS MUSIC will be handled as a specific thing in other articles. All this tripe is by the editor. I am limiting myself here to FACTS as they are generally accepted and as they have been accepted and handed down from non-academic, non-thesis writing graduate students - our own backwoods American brethren and historical counterparts - the people who created the Bluegrass sound, not the term Bluegrass or a group with the word Bluegrass as a part of their professional name. Bluegrass Music existed long before anyone thought of giving it a name. POINT NO. 1. What instruments are included in a Bluegrass Band and what type of instruments are they? All, I say again ALL INSTRUMENTS IN A BLUEGRASS BAND ARE NON-AMPLIFIED that's right, NON-AMPLIFIED instruments. They are what is generally called ACOUSTIC instruments. It matters not what you may have heard or read on a record shuck, the sound of a Bluegrass Banjo is not a sound generated through an amplifier and speaker. It is the genuine sound of a 5 STRING BANJO (no tenor or plectrum job) which uses NO electrical pick-up. You might like the sound yourself, but the amplifier renders the amplified Banjo NON-BLUEGRASS. So, the instruments are the GUITAR, (Flat Top (no arched top F hole job) MANDOLIN, DOBRO, FIDDLE, (looks something like a Violin) STRING BASS and that instrument which actually characterizes a Band as BLUEGRASS ----- THE 5 STRING BANJO. (Played with a three finger roll- got it???)

NOW, certainly you can play in the BLUEGRASS IDIOM or BLUEGRASS STYLE with amplified instruments, but you cease to be a BLUEGRASS BAND when the amplifier is used. COUNTRY MUSIC means a million different things today, and the field is getting so broad that rock and roll and jazz are a regular part of it along with a heap of other rot. So, you can have)and call it) a COUNTRY BAND with all sorts of instruments, but it won't be a BLUEGRASS BAND, not in the least. You can play the Bluegrass Banjo with a full symphony orchestra (as Bob Johnson once did on an MGM Album)but Robert would be the last one to say that the whole thing was A BLUEGRASS BAND. It was a genuine Bluegrass 5 String Banjo played with the characteristic 3 finger style of picking. This is employing the Bluegrass instruments and licks in other types of music. So, the Guitar, String Bass, Mandolin, Fiddle, Dobro, and 5 String Banjo with all instruments acoustic rather than amplified constitute a BLUEGRASS BAND. If you are forming a group and expect it to pass for a BLUEGRASS BAND, the above mentioned pre-requisites are MANDATORY. Certainly there are problems which arise when forming the group from the standpoint of having a very good musician or a good friend who plays an amplified instrument who wants to be a part of the group, but if you are going to be fair to yourself and your public, you will have to explain things to the fellow in a nice way. If there is no way around including him or you like the sound of the amplified instrument then satisfy yourself with the term COUNTRY and not use the term BLUEGRASS. You may play some Bluegrass numbers and most of the band will play in a Bluegrass Style and even the Electric Guitar player will use a Basic Bluegrass lick, but you will be COUNTRY and not BLUEGRASS. I have labored the subject, but for good reason. I have repeated myself on several occasions, but these are the established facts and you will do well to heed them. In the next article, I will touch on such things as grouping of instruments, and characteristic Bluegrass licks. The Editor

Members of the Bluegrass Society(ABS) who have indicated their desire to have their names published in the Bulletin for correspondence with other members. Unless you specifically state in writing that you desire your name printed we will not print it, yea, we cannot...Here is the first group of names. Correspond with one another via letter, via tape, via telephone, via motor-scooter, but have fun.....

Clyde W. Langille, 2529 Veterans Drive, Wilmington, Delaware, 19803
Herwig Van Horenbeeck, Hendrick Kuypersstraat 57, Mortsel, Antwerp, BELGIUM.

Jack Ramsey, 1204 E. Baker Street, Plant City, Florida 33566

Leon H. Houston, 1408 Raymond Street Rd., South Elgin, Illinois 60177

Robert L. Poast, 270 Maple Avenue, Carlisle, Ohio

Leland G. MacMillan, 15734 Lindsay, Detroit 27, Michigan

Lee Criss, 15890 Bryce Road, Capac, Michigan

Alvin Bennett, Route # 2, Union Mills, North Carolina

We heard from many, many of our members who sent their dues, but did not print permission to print their names. If you neglected to tell us specifically we will have to insist on such authorization before we will print the name., so take time to give us that authorization. If you have friends who play other instruments and want to join the American Bluegrass Society, have them send the 2 bucks. They don't even have to play an instrument as long as they are interested in the Bluegrass music which we love and seek to promote. Editor

RECORDS

ABS MEMBER Leon Houston of South Elgin, Illinois advises other members who may be interested that Rebel Records, P. O. Box 246, Mount Rainier, Maryland offers 70 Bluegrass Recordings (3 LPs) for the price of \$4.98 and they are excellent quality and excellent music according to member Houston. The Bookshelf nor the Editor of the Bulletin has heard the music so no endorsement by the Bookshelf is made, but if member Houston likes them perhaps you would also. He heard of the offer through WWVA Wheeling, West Virginia. Houston lives in Illinois, listened to a station in Wheeling, West Virginia, and sent to Mount Rainier, Maryland for the records. That is going around a bit for some bluegrass music. I hope it is a good offer.

EDWIN BOLTON, 417 Rose Street, Wilton Junction, Iowa (near Davenport and the Tri-City area) is the appointed President of the ABS for the first year. Appointment made by the Editor of the Bulletin until such time as we can arrange for annual balloting. Ed is married to a Guitar pickin gal called Ruth and has a house full of young Banjo and Guitar potentials. When your membership cards are printed, Ed will be signing them and sending them on your way. Ed plays a VEGA Earl Scruggs Model St 5 Stringer which he dearly loves and treats like it was a baby. Ruth, his wife, says that he is better to the Banjo than he is to her...better whatch out....but my wife says the same thing to me. Ruth plays a Martin Guitar which she recently had refinished - she didn't say so, but I wonder if the Martin Guitar receives better attention than Ed gets. Ed and Ruth have a couple of Tape Recorders, a Sony 200 Stereo which plays both 7½ and 3-3/4 ips and a Norelco which does a good job on 1-7/8 ips. Tape letters can be handled by Ed and Ruth. Write or tape to Ed and Ruth - two real proponants of Bluegrass Music. Ed teaches 5 String Banjo and Ruth teaches Guitar and Tenor Guitar. They make a jam session of it just about each afternoon when Ed gets home from work. Do we have any other husband and wife teams?????? Write to Ed or Editor. (Rhymes!!)

SUPPLIES FROM BOOKSHELF

The Bluegrass Bookshelf, Box 397 Seffner, Florida 33584 which fostered the American Bluegrass Society is stocked with the major items you need and use. We have stocked only those items which are good quality and prices are reasonable. Let us supply you with your needs in the way of supplies and new and used instruments. Pete Richardson will teach via tape or letter on a strictly personal basis, cost is \$10.00 per lesson via tape and \$7.00 per lesson via letter. Tape is best and Pete can explain how to "get out of a particular hole" that you may be in or explain how to play a certain run or song. Depend on the Bookshelf before using other suppliers. Many of the supplies are hand made which means a great deal these days.

BLUEGRASS IS OUR BUSINESS - OUR ONLY BUSINESS

Send in your suggestions, news, instruments to sell through the Bookshelf, names for publication, photos of yourself and your instrument for publication - we are printing photos now. Lets get this thing moving. TABLATURES FOR SONGS BEGIN NEXT MONTH. Have a good Thanksgiving Day and Thank God For Bluegrass Music and Earl Scruggs!

UNTIL DECEMBER - KEEP :ICKING
AND SINGING

THE AMERICAN BLUEGRASS SOCIETY
P. O. Box 397
Seffner, Florida 33584

Here's your first issue
of the Bluegrass Bulletin!